

OPINION 1142

FAMILY-GROUP NAMES BASED ON *PLATYSTOMA*
MEIGEN, 1803, GIVEN PRECEDENCE OVER THOSE BASED
ON *ACHIAS* FABRICIUS, 1805 (DIPTERA)

RULING – (1) Under the plenary powers, it is hereby ruled that family-group names based on *Platystoma* Meigen, 1803, are to be given precedence over family-group names based on *Achias* Fabricius, 1805, whenever those two genera are placed in the same family-group taxon.

(2) The following generic names are hereby placed on the Official List of Generic Names in Zoology with the Name Numbers specified:

- (a) *Platystoma* Meigen, 1803 (gender: neuter), type species, by monotypy, *Musca seminationis* Fabricius, 1775 (Name Number 2092);
- (b) *Achias* Fabricius, 1805 (gender: masculine), type species, by monotypy, *Achias oculatus* Fabricius, 1805 (Name Number 2093).

(3) The following names are hereby placed on the Official List of Specific Names in Zoology with the Name Numbers specified:

- (a) *seminationis* Fabricius, 1775, as published in the binomen *Musca seminationis* (specific name of type species of *Platystoma* Meigen, 1803) (Name Number 2694);
- (b) *oculatus* Fabricius, 1805, as published in the binomen *Achias oculatus* (specific name of type species of *Achias* Fabricius, 1805) (Name Number 2695).

(4) The following names are hereby placed on the Official List of Family-Group Names in Zoology with the Name Numbers and endorsements specified:

- (a) PLATYSTOMATIDAE Schiner, 1862 (as “Platystominae”) (type genus *Platystoma* Meigen, 1803) (Name Number 502), with an endorsement that it is to be given precedence over ACHIDAE Fleming, 1821 whenever *Platystoma* Meigen, 1803, and *Achias* Fabricius, 1805, are placed in the same family-group taxon;
- (b) ACHIDAE Fleming, 1821 (as “Achiasidae”) (type genus *Achias* Fabricius, 1805) (Name Number 503) with an endorsement that it is not to be given priority over PLATYSTOMATIDAE Schiner, 1862, whenever

Platystoma Meigen, 1803, and *Achias* Fabricius, 1805, are placed in the same family-group taxon.

HISTORY OF THE CASE Z.N.(S.) 2053

An application for the suppression of the family name ACHIDAE Fleming, 1821 was first received from Mr George C. Steyskal (*Systematic Entomology Laboratory USDA, c/o U.S. National Museum, Washington D.C. 20560, U.S.A.*) and Dr D.K. McAlpine (*Australian Museum, Sydney 2000, Australia*) on 28 September 1973. After an exchange of correspondence it was sent to the printer on 14 January 1974 and published on 31 July 1974 in *Bull. zool. Nom.* vol. 31: 59–61. Public notice of the possible use of the plenary powers in the case was given in the same part of the *Bulletin* as well as to the statutory serials and to seven entomological serials.

Dr Holthuis pointed out that no family-group name can be suppressed unless the name of its type genus is suppressed at the same time. He suggested that the applicants should ask for family-group names based on *Platystoma* to be given precedence over family-group names based on *Achias*, and his comment was published in *Bull. zool. Nom.* vol. 31: 177. The applicants did as he suggested in the following note, which was circulated with the voting paper referred to below.

“Of course Dr Holthuis is correct in pointing out that as long as a generic name is available it may be used as the basis of a family-group name of some rank or other (a zoological consideration). Therefore what we are seeking is really the preference of *Platystoma* over *Achias* as the basonym for any family-group taxon in which both genera are included. At any rank in which *Achias* and *Platystoma* are considered to belong to separate named family-group taxa, those taxa may be typified by those genera. We therefore agree to amend and complete our proposals and to ask the Commission:

- (1) to use its plenary powers to rule that family-group names based on *Platystoma* Meigen, 1803, are to be given precedence over family-group names based on *Achias* Fabricius, 1805, whenever those two genera are placed in the same family-group taxon;
- (2) to place on the Official List of Generic Names in Zoology
 - (a) *Platystoma* Meigen, 1803, (*Illiger's*) *Magazin für Insektenkunde*, vol. 2: 277 (gender: neuter) (type species, *Musca seminationis* Fabricius, 1775, *Systema Entomologiae*: 786, by monotypy);

- (b) *Achias* Fabricius, 1805, *Systema Antliatorum*: 247 (gender, masculine) (type species, *Achia oculatus* Fabricius, 1805, loc. cit., by monotypy);
- (3) to place on the Official List of Specific Names in Zoology
- (a) *seminationis*, *Musca*, Fabricius, 1775, *Systema Entomologiae*: 786;
- (b) *oculatus*, *Achias*, Fabricius, 1805, *Systema Antliatorum*: 247.”

“The citation by Becker (1905, *Kat. Paläarkt. Dipt.* vol. 4: 103) of “*seminationis* L. Fauna Suec., 1874. [*Musca*] (1766)” is erroneous, apparently for *germinationis*, cited further on under *Opomyza* correctly. This error unfortunately has been taken up by a few later authors.”

The action proposed implies the further action incorporated in paragraph (4) of the present ruling.

DECISION OF THE COMMISSION

On 27 September 1978 the members of the Commission were invited to vote under the Three-Month Rule on Voting Paper (1978)22 for or against the proposals set out in the note quoted above. At the close of the voting period on 27 December 1978 the state of the voting was as follows:

Affirmative Votes – twenty (20) received in the following order: Melville, Mroczkowski, Holthuis, Brinck, Eisenmann, Alvarado, Vokes, Willink, Habe, Tortonese, Binder, Corliss, Welch, Bayer, Cogger, Kraus, Nye, Sabrosky, Dupuis (for proposal (1) only), Bernardi

Negative Votes – two (2): Heppell, Dupuis (against proposals (2) and (3) only).

Ride was on leave. No vote was returned by Starobogatov.

The following comments were sent in by members of the Commission with their voting papers:

Heppell: “I find it very difficult to vote on such a case. If we adhere to the rules and favour the little-used ACHIDAE there would be discouragement to other workers thinking of bringing similar cases to the Commission; names in general use would continue to be used, and the prior names would be quietly ignored. If we grant the applicants’ request we accept that this case is one of very many where an exception to the rule should be made in conformity with general usage, and possibly open the gates to a flood of similar applications, each of which, if granted, reduces the value of the rule. Holthuis has pointed out one problem with family names – that they cannot be suppressed without limiting taxono-

mic freedom. Among other associated problems are the difficulty of ascertaining the earliest usage of family names, the well-established practice (not authorised by the Code) of basing the family name on the oldest included generic name, and the use of family names in a taxonomic sense often before the type genus was objectively defined by fixation of its type species (Article 41). Unfortunately, because names on the Official Lists have no enhanced status, the addition of PLATYSTOMATIDAE to the list would not automatically give it precedence over ACHIDAE, which is all the applicants require from the Commission. The Commission has the option here of adding both names to the Official List, with a grant of precedence to the junior name, but this is an inelegant solution that tends to confuse zoologists not familiar with nomenclatural sophistry.

"The present rule applying priority to family names has been in force for twenty years, during which time I believe the consequent changes in family-group nomenclature have either been ignored or not realised. When they have been realised, applications have been made to suppress the senior unused name in favour of the junior name in current use, or to grant precedence to the latter over the former. It seems to me to be time to go back to the zoological fraternity and ask whether provisions for family-group nomenclature should continue to be incorporated in the Code. If the answer is still in the affirmative, then the Commission should rigorously vote against such applications as the present one, only allowing the rules to be waived in exceptional circumstances. There seems to me to be no sense in keeping provisions in the Code for historical purposes if they are not observed by responsible zoologists because of practical difficulties. Even in 1956 H.B. Baker (Family names in Pulmonata, *Nautilus*, vol. 69: 128–139) was aware of the problems inherent in the proposed changes to the Code, and concluded: '... the rule of priority, if applied also to families, would favor the careless splitter, and establish names impetuously applied to aberrant and isolated forms'. In voting against this application I feel that the proposals as resubmitted are subordinate to the sole desired end, namely that PLATYSTOMATIDAE be confirmed as the valid name for the family subjectively synonymous with ACHIDAE. If the Commission were to accept the principle that names on the Official Lists should have automatic precedence over any synonyms, objective or subjective, not on the Lists, this case could be effectively dealt with merely by placing PLATYSTOMATIDAE on the Official List."

Nye: "Although I support the aim of the proposals, they are still not complete. The names PLATYSTOMATIDAE Schiner, 1862, and ACHIDAE Fleming, 1821, should both be placed on the

Official List with annotations giving the former precedence over the latter." [This has been taken into account in drafting the present ruling. R.V.M.]

ORIGINAL REFERENCES

The following are the original references to the names placed on Official Lists by the ruling given in the present Opinion:

Achias Fabricius, 1805, *Syst. Antl.*: 247

ACHIIDAE Fleming, 1821, *Philos. zool.*: 55 (as "Achiasidae")
oculatus, *Achias*, Fabricius, 1805, *Syst. Antl.*: 247

Platystoma Meigen, 1803, *Illiger's Mag. Insektenk.*, vol. 2: 277

PLATYSTOMATIDAE Schiner, 1862, *Wien. ent. Monatschr.*, vol. 6: 151

seminationis, *Musca*, Fabricius, 1775, *Syst. Ent.*: 786.

CERTIFICATE

I hereby certify that the votes cast on V.P. (78)22 were cast as set out above, that the proposal contained in that voting paper has been duly adopted under the plenary powers, and that the decision so taken, being the decision of the International Commission on Zoological Nomenclature, is truly recorded in the present Opinion No. 1142.

R.V. MELVILLE

Secretary

International Commission on Zoological Nomenclature

London

3 April 1979